

SCOTT COUNTY KICKER.

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OBSERVATIONS BY THE KICKER.

Conditions in Mexico as Seen by Writers in Capitalist Publications.--The Taft-Diaz Love Feast.

At this time the conditions in Mexico are of particular interest to the people of the United States. We are in the habit of speaking of Mexico as our "sister republic" and many have been led to believe that conditions there are even better than here. When the capitalists planned the hand-shaking and feast of President Taft and President Diaz they, no doubt, were ignorant of the extent that the masses are aware of the conditions in Mexico. And now that Taft is on the way, quite all the newspapers that have any independence at all are protesting.

The St. Louis Mirror says--
At last this country has awakened to the fact that Mexico is not the enlightened, progressive country we have thought. The fact is that Diaz is a tyrant, that liberty is unknown there, that the progress of the country consists chiefly in graft, the graft friends of Diaz are getting off the American and other foreigners, who are gobbling up about everything that is valuable in that land. The republic is founded on peonage. The common people are regarded as little better than cattle. Men who are opposed to the Diaz government are thrown into prison, like San Juan d'Ulloa, there to be forgotten and rot. Agitators for the making of the country a republic in fact as well as in name have to escape to the United States and the United States sends them back or punishes them for printing newspapers here for circulation in Mexico.

For two years and more the Appeal to Reason of Girard, Kan., has been picturing the terrible conditions in Mexico, but because it is a Socialist newspaper the other papers did not comment upon it. The reason was plain. Diaz is the friend and the accomplice of the big capitalists of this country, who are grabbing Mexico. Those capitalists want to keep in the good graces of Diaz. They have a pull with the papers and those papers have only compliments for the dictator. The Mirror has referred to the true situation several times within two years, pointing out the absurdity of this country's playing into the hands of Diaz as it has been, and as it is now about to do more conspicuously, when President Taft shall meet him at El Paso for a love feast. This event will undoubtedly solidify around Diaz the special interests that have an interest in perpetuating his power.

Into this disgusting cynical discussion the Appeal to Reason projects the consideration of the rights of the people, but who cares for Socialist clap-trap? Isn't the editor of that paper been sentenced to jail for mailing a postal card that his town's postmaster and his district's United States attorney told him he could mail? Haven't the authorities done everything they could to crush the paper? Why, the thing isn't respectable; it's a rag. But maybe there will be some heed paid to the case of the poor Mexican when the American Magazine issues its announced exposure of the rottenness, the tyranny, the medieval cruelty of the Diaz regime. Unless American sentiment has some effect the Mexican people will simply lose, no matter whether Reyes or Corral wins. With President Taft swapping taffy with Diaz, it looks as if there isn't much chance for official United States sympathy with the poor "Greasers."

But the hardest knock comes from the American Magazine of New York. John Kenneth Turner spent eighteen months in Mexico studying conditions. He first heard the story from Mexican refugees which this "land of the oppressed" held in prison--and is still holding--because they oppose Diaz. They told Mr. Turner how things were in Mexico and he did not believe it.

The author says in part--"I found Mexico a country with a constitution and with written laws as far as our country, but neither the constitution nor laws are in operation. Mexico is a country without political freedom, without a free ballot, without a free press, without political parties. It is a land where there is no contest for the office of president for a generation, where the executive rules things by means of a standing army, where political offices are sold for a fixed price, where the public schools system in vast country districts is abolished because a government needs the money."

Turner declares he found the first traces of slavery in Yucatan, where the soil is adapted to the growing of century plants, which produce hehenequen or sisal hemp. The vast majority of the population is held by fifty hehenequen kings,

who hold 100,000 men and women in actual slavery.

The slave owners, Turner declares, call the system "enforced service for debt." They have agents whose duty it is to get men and women into their debt. Once a man is in debt he is seized and sent to work on the hehenequen plantations. He is never paid wages. All he "earns" is credited to his debt and to his living expenses. The living expenses always equal the amount earned, so that the debt is never canceled. Not only is the debtor held in slavery but his entire family, his children and their children. Once a man falls into the hands of the hehenequen kings his race becomes a race of slaves. To make their slaves work the worst kinds of tortures are inflicted upon them, according to the writer. Men are literally beaten to death.

The slaves, according to the author, are forced to rise at 3-45 each morning and get to work as soon as they can see. Each slave is beaten unless he does an allotted amount each day, and as this amount is so fixed that a man cannot do it alone, he is forced to call his wife and children to assist him to save him from a beating.

To the average Socialist Mr. Turner's story is not new. We have known that these conditions exist on American soil and told you about it--but many refused to believe it. But now that it appears in a capitalist magazine, I guess it will sorter pass for truth among the "upper class."

Disguised as a tramp he crossed the border to see for himself. In this garb he spent months among the slaves or peons of Mexico and learned all about them. He covered almost every portion of the nation. In the state of Yucatan, where conditions are worst, he changed his garb and appeared as a capitalist wishing to invest in land. In this way he worked his way into the inner circle of slave-drivers and their "business men's association."

What I want to get into deeper than anything else is that Mexico is a republic with a constitution and written laws as far as our own. You are told much about your "constitutional rights," and the "protection of the law," by the organs and agents of capitalism, yet we are being Mexicanized in a gallop. Every observer knows that in this republic the constitution and laws are made to mean whatever best fits the interests of the ruling class, and that a poor devil has no chance. The constitution and the laws are a joke when they come in conflict with capitalism.

Talk about law! Last week Charley Miller, a farmer living between here and Morley, brot a bundle of clothes to a boy in jail. "The boy was working for me when he was arrested," said Mr. Miller to the Kicker.

"What is his name?"

"Will Ellis, same as the deputy sheriff."

"What is he charged with?"

"Shooting craps down at Vanduser. He seems to be a good boy and says he wasn't in the game, but that he was asked to shoot another fellow's hand and was caught."

"If the authorities are so anxious to enforce the law, wonder why they don't arrest themselves?" asked the Kicker. "They are violating the printing law, which is just as plain and just as criminal as the law against craps shooting."

"I don't know," replied Mr. Miller.

This boy will lay in jail until circuit court, and will then likely lay out a jail sentence for shooting craps for a nickel or a dime, while the big grain and stock gamblers who "shoot" for thousands of dollars go about looking pious and wise.

Let me here give the craps shooters and petty offenders a tip. Do as the big gamblers do. Elect yourselves to office, make and enforce the laws. Then you can make craps shooting legal.

See that craps shooters are in office, and they will select craps shooters as grand jurors, and one will be made the foreman. Didn't you see how a stockholder of the court house organ was made foreman of your last grand

jury? Let me quote you a little law that the last grand jury evidently overlooked--

Sec. 4680. Officers to procure best rates--In procuring the publication of any law, proclamation, advertisement or notice, as in the next preceding section mentioned, the public officer SHALL ACCEPT OF THE MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TERMS THAT CAN BE OBTAINED, not to exceed the rates LIMITED in the next preceding section.

Now, the penalty for violating this law is much greater than for shooting craps. While I did not expect anything to come of it, yet I told a member of the last grand jury that if the jury wanted evidence of the violation of the above section, I was willing to furnish car-loads of it. But I was not called? Why?

How can you expect your boys to respect and obey the law when the men in authority violate it? Look at the organ and see the amount of circuit court printing it contains and, so far as I know, no effort was made by any official to obey the law and secure "the most advantageous terms that can be secured." Why?

But let us return to Mexico. It is worse there. Let me first quote from Article I, Section I, of the Mexican constitution--

"In the Republic all are born free. Slaves who set foot upon the national territory recover by that act alone, their liberty, and have a right to the protection of our laws."

Sec. I, of Article V, reads--"No one shall be compelled to do personal work without just compensation, and without his full consent."

With this as the fundamental law, does it seem possible that slavery in its worst form should exist? Few of us realize how near we of the United States are to the same conditions. In the southern states men out of work are arrested for "vagrancy" and placed on convict farms to work for the cotton planters. This has not yet been recognized as legal, but investigation reveals that officials high in authority profit by it and are seldom punished. A little time will fix all that.

Yes, it is knocking at our door. The credit system--rent, interest and profit--is responsible for the condition of the Mexican workers. And what that system has done in Mexico it can do here. Already our creditor can sell everything we have to satisfy his mortgage or trust deed and even garnish the wages of the worker. The one step necessary is to enact a law compelling men and women who have no property to render personal service for debt. Then the creditor would have the right to fix the compensation--and once a slave, always a slave. Here is a law, in part, what Mr. Turner says of Mexico--

"The slaves of Yucatan get no money. They are half starved. They are worked almost to death. They are beaten. A large percentage of them are locked up every night in a house resembling a jail. If they are sick they must still work; they are not permitted the services of a physician. The women are compelled to marry, compelled to marry men of their own plantation only, and sometimes are compelled to marry certain men not of their choice. There are no schools for the children. Indeed, the entire lives of these people are ordered at the whim of a master and if the master wishes to kill them, he may do so with impunity. I heard numerous stories of slaves being beaten to death, but I never heard of an instance in which the murderer was punished, or even arrested. The police, the public prosecutors and the judges know exactly what was expected of them, for the men who appoint them are the planters themselves."

Note carefully what Mr. Turner says about the police, the public prosecutor and the judges. Give the ruling class these, and you can have all the "constitutional rights" and law that you want. In Mexico they are "appointed" by the planters. Our masters are not quite so rude. Here they only "appoint" the nominees on both old party tickets and then let you take your choice--the "lesser of two evils," as you generally call it. Mr. Turner goes on--

"One of the first sights we saw on a hehenequen plantation was the beating of a slave--a formal beating before the assembled toilers of the ranch early in the morning just after the daily roll call. The slave was taken on the back of a huge Chinaman and given fifteen lashes across the

bare back with a heavy wet rope. Lashes so lustily delivered that the blood ran down the victim's body. This method of beating is an ancient one in Yucatan and is the customary one on all the plantations for boys and all except the heaviest men. Women are required to kneel to be beaten, as sometimes are men of great weight. Men and women are beaten in the fields as well as at the morning roll-call. Each foreman, or capataz, carries a heavy cane with which he punches and prods and whacks the slaves at will. I do not remember of visiting a single field in which I did not see some of this punishing and prodding and whacking going on."

"I saw no punishment worse than beating in Yucatan, but I heard of it. I was told of men being strung up by their fingers or the toes to be beaten, of their being thrust into black dungeons, holes, of water being dropped on the head until the victim screamed, of the extremity of female punishment being found in some outrages to the sense of modesty in the women. I saw the black holes, and everywhere I saw jail dormitories, armed guards who patrolled the outskirts of the farm settlements while the slaves slept."

AND YOUR president, Mr. Free Born American Citizen, is now on his way to pay his respects to the tyrant who is responsible for these conditions, and thereby give your endorsement. How do you like it? Don't it make you feel like throwing up that old hat as you do at election times?

The large mass of Maya slaves were formerly the land owners, but they were lulled to sleep with songs about "liberty"--and robbed. They were legislated out of house and home while following the brass band and the Diaz parade. Of a plantation 36 miles square, with 1,500 slaves, Mr. Turner writes--

"Seven hundred of the slaves are able-bodied men, the rest are women and children. Three hundred and eighty of the men are married and live with their families in the one-room huts. These huts are set in little patches of ground 144 feet square, which, rocky and barren as they are, are cultivated to some small purpose by the women and children. In addition to the product of their barren garden patch, each family receives daily credit at the plantation store for 25 centavos, or two and one-half cents, worth of merchandise. This money is paid; it is all in credit, and this same system prevails on about half the plantations. The other half merely deal out rations. It amounts to the same thing, but some of the planters, stick to the money credit system merely in order to keep up the pretense of paying wages. I priced some of the goods at the store--corn, beans, salt, pepper, clothing and blankets were about 80 cents per sack, second grade 75 cents, third grade 70 cents. What does a sack of flour cost you here, gentle reader? Don't it cost about 20 cents more? And can you buy any other flour in Jackson but Jackson made flour? Are not the merchants and grocers here in a sense forbidden to sell Appleton, Fruitland, Millerville or Pocaohontas flour? If that is not so, will some one please show it in these columns that the C-K man may be corrected?"

I do not know about Cape County, but am inclined to believe that this is "all in the play," and that an investigation will reveal the Cape County milling trust. The story that the Cape concern is afraid of the Jackson concern because it is "stronger" sounds fishy. However, it will not be long until all of the mills of the county will be organized into one gigantic trust, and then the producer will get for his grain what the trust is willing to pay, and the price of flour and meal will advance to where the poor will be obliged to eat fodder.

At this time small combines are organized in counties, and these will eventually be consolidated. Our own Scott county milling trust has already extended into neighboring counties and, no doubt, all the mills of the different counties have a "gentleman's agreement." Of course such combinations are in violation of law, and if our authorities could smell a trust half as far as they can smell a craps shooter, they might get their names in the papers as trust-busters.

See your neighbor. If he is not a reader of the Kicker, see that he becomes one. Agitate!

IT IS TO LAUGH. It would have delighted the heart of every Christian citizen of this state to have heard Rev. S. E. Betts, D. D., of St. Louis, "skin" Clarence S. Darrow at the local option debate in Blodgett. It was a Christian man against the atheist and scoffer, whose chief argument was the ridicule of the Christian religion. No better man than Dr. Betts could be found to do the "skinning," and he did it to the delight of the crowd--American issue.

They who were fortunate enough to be at Blodgett will smile at the above as they recall who it was that got the skinning.

CAN YOU FIGURE? I have been figuring a little, and I am unable to figure out where the producer is benefitted by the profit system. I am going to submit my figures to you and see what you say about it.

As I figure it the workers are the "mud-mills" of our industrial system. They are at the bottom of all wealth, and are also at the bottom otherwise. There is no one below them on whom they can shift the load by extracting profit, and the fellows above are in the profit extracting business themselves. All above the workers have it in their power, at least to some extent, to fix prices. The producer gets the price fixed for him. He looks at his paper, examines the market reports as fixed by the speculators, and that settles it. He has no say in the matter.

On the other hand, the price on what he buys is also fixed. He has no choice. If he needs a wagon, mow, plow, groceries, clothing, medicine, flour, or any of the necessities, he must pay the price fixed--or do without. He is a helpless creature in the business world and is skinned going and coming.

The farmer hauls his wheat to the station when his paper tells him that the price is \$1.10 in St. Louis. The dealer pays him \$1.00 per bushel. It costs, say, five cents to get the grain on the market and the dealer profits. It is five cents per bushel. If at this rate, the dealer buys 1,000 bushels per day his profit is \$50. The five cents that it costs to get the grain marketed is also deducted from the original price paid; hence the FARMER producer pays the freight, commission, elevator charges and the local dealers profit.

The miller who buys the wheat grinds it into flour and feed stuff and sells it to the consumer, who must pay the whole bill--including the grinding and the retailers profit. The mill will not sell to him any cheaper than the retailer, for it must protect its customers at your expense.

If you sell your grain to local mills they will pay no more than the St. Louis price--less the dealers' commission, freight, etc. They know they have you where the wool is short. They pay no more than the dealers and, in fact, local dealers are generally their agents. I don't blame them for doing this. I would do it. You would do it. It is "business." And "business is business," you know. In the Jackson Cashbook of last week I find the following:

We see by the Cape papers that the mills down there are advertising their flour in the local papers--competing with each other for trade. But from what we have heard they dare not compete with the milling corporation here. A Jackson paper tried to buy a sack of flour from a Cape mill the other day and they said they could not sell him the flour, because the corporation at Jackson was so much stronger than the company that they were afraid of it. "My country, tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee we sing." And the Cape mills are advertising their flour, best, 80 cents per sack, second grade 75 cents, third grade 70 cents. What does a sack of flour cost you here, gentle reader? Don't it cost about 20 cents more? And can you buy any other flour in Jackson but Jackson made flour? Are not the merchants and grocers here in a sense forbidden to sell Appleton, Fruitland, Millerville or Pocaohontas flour? If that is not so, will some one please show it in these columns that the C-K man may be corrected?

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ONE HOSS PHYLOSOPHY.

J. A. Wayland in Studies in Socialism.

The production of pig iron last year was ten million tons LESS than the year before. It would have been just as easy to produce an increase as it was to produce less, but as there was no profit in producing what could not be sold, the workers were turned out to starve or live on decreased rations. The production in 1907 was 25,000,000 tons and 15,000,000 tons in 1908. There is more need of iron than is produced. People are in need of things made of iron that they cannot buy because it is too high. Under a sane system of industry the public would own and operate the mines and the public would build the railroads, ships, bridges and buildings. Do you think that the people, under public ownership, would discharge themselves to starve and do without the things they need? The people have to live, and would it not be better to have them produce things that are needed than to turn them out of employment and not have the things? Individual ownership cannot do this, but collective ownership not only could, but it would. Do you think starving, idle men are better than busy, well-fed people.

One-third of the whole population is engaged, not in production but in preventing production. How many thousands would be farming today if they were permitted to use the land? or would be mining if they were permitted? or would be making things if they were permitted? Can you not see that a system that prevents men and women from doing things that should be done, making things they are in need of, is all wrong? Why should the workers be put to being servants of the few who call rich--the few who work work, the few who are reveling in luxury they have not helped to produce? If you had any sense you could see that things are upside down. The useful people are at the bottom and the useless people are on top. Not only here, but everywhere on earth is this true. Look at Italy, at Spain, at Russia, at China, at Japan, at Mexico--everywhere you see the same condition. Wake up!

Food and drink are adulterated solely for the reason that the owners of the plants can thereby make more profits. If there were no profits in the poisoning and cheapening of the commodities, there would be no such deception and fraud and crime. Will you not agree to that? Then a sane man can disagree with the further statement that if the present system of ownership and production of the goods that no one would gain by adulteration and therefore there would be no adulteration. Why spend millions to pay spies, detectives, lawyers, court costs, etc., to watch and punish the owners of plants and still have vitiated goods. If you can trust the government to employ men to prevent fraud, why can you not trust it to employ men to make the goods at cost and save the expense of the sentinel? Why remain stupid all your life? Why not do a little thinking?

From every city comes reports of diseased milk and unsanitary dairies. This is the cry year in and year out. Not only that, but the farmers are forced to sell milk cheap so that the distributing monopoly of capitalists may make big profits. And it could be so easily remedied! All that is necessary to get good, wholesome milk at a reasonable price is for the city to own and operate the dairy business. It can then have any kind of milk it desires at cost, and no one will make a profit by supplying cheap, nasty, adulterated or infected milk. So long as money can be made by those handling milk by adulteration, so long will it be adulterated. You would do it, and you must.

"ON THE WAY."

Chicago Daily Socialist--
Let no American workman or woman forget that one of the objects of the present journey of the president is to meet and shake hands with the dictator of Mexico.

Of the countries that call themselves civilized there are but two that are governed by despots and ruled by terror. Those two are Russia and Mexico. The two have much else in common. Both are just emerging into capitalism. Both are soaked in the blood of their own people. In both every vestige of liberty of the press, of speech and assembly has been destroyed. Each has dungeons whose indescribable horrors are reserved for such of their citizens as dare to speak for human freedom.

When Taft was in Russia he drank the health of the Czar. He is now on his way to shake hands with Diaz. When he has done this he will, in his personality, have linked together two of the worst brutes that modern times have produced.

Russian bonds are owned by American capitalists. The credit of the Russian bonds rests upon the same bayonets that uphold the throne of the Czar and suppress the liberties of his subjects. Therefore Taft, as the representative of the American

expect others are much like yourself. Only by collective ownership will the incentive to cheat be abolished. Will you never grasp a statement as simple as that.

The wage-earners of the United States produce, in one year, finished goods worth over \$14,000,000,000, or \$2,115,881,414 more than all the capital invested in all the industries enumerated. This means that if the wage-earners owned the tools of production they could produce enough in one single year to buy all the buildings, all the land on which the buildings stand, all the machinery, all the accounts receivable, all the raw materials, all the stock in process of manufacture and all the finished product on hand of all the manufacturing plants in the United States and have \$2,115,881,414 left. Think of it! In just one year if you owned the tools.

Jay Gould once said that he could hire one-half of the people to shoot the other half. Jay was right. In Russia we see the Czar hiring half the people to kill the other half; we find the same thing in every country. We see Americans hired as soldiers to shoot the workers--the strikers for justice. But there is another thing. Rulers have not been able to hire specialists to shoot the people. Only ignorant or degraded people will hire themselves out to kill other people.

Six English noblemen own more land in this nation than the whole area of Indiana! Besides, there are more than 100 English noblemen owning great tracts, to say nothing of their partnership in corporations that own areas greater than many kingdoms. But, of course, the great, big, fat, free, liberty-loving, American would not endure a land-lordism like the poor peasants of Europe do! Of course not! It might startle you to read an article in the Technical World Magazine about "Who owns the earth?"

If you are engaged in a struggle to dethrone a king, would you select the generals and beneficiaries of the king to direct your operations? No. Then why do you expect the present administration to dethrone the trusts, when the cabinet is composed of trust magnates, of men who are owners in trust of men who are attorneys for trusts? What is Taft giving you? Taft's

SOCIALISM comes as the friend of the home, to enable all men to have home and opportunity and all women to have pleasant surroundings of their own. Socialism will be the realization of all that capitalism has deprived you of.

Socialism is the doctrine of good cheer. It is at once a promise and a prospect.

Socialism comes to enable all to have private property and plenty to give them luxuries.

Socialism does not propose to "give" you your full social product, but merely to see that you are enabled to retain it.

Socialism would destroy individuality of the devours and reduce them to the dead level of having to make their own way. Socialism is not what someone wants to provide for you, but a chance for you to provide the very good that you have dreamed of.

Socialism is the way of success. It will provide a means whereby you may realize the good that capitalism has deprived you of.

Socialism will not take your farm or your home, but will end the burden of the mortgage and the weight of rent and profit that has kept you down.

Socialism does not come to take your hope and your possessions, but to give you hope and enable you and all others to be truly rich.

bondholders, drinks the health of the Czar.

Mexican railroads, mines and plantations are owned by American capitalists. The industries are worked by enslaved peons. Upon the perpetuation of that slavery depends the dividends upon these securities owned by American capitalists. Peonage in Mexico rests upon the brutal rule of Diaz. Therefore Taft, as the representative of American capitalists, shake hands with Diaz.

There is something that the public school teachers of Chicago should tell their pupils today. They should tell these children that the big, fat man whom they saw ride through the streets of Chicago is on his way to the border of Mexico, where he will shake the hand of a man who has probably been directly responsible for more brutal murders than any other man on this continent.

This would be a lesson in history in the making.

For Sale.--350 acres--240 in cultivation. As good land as can be found in Scott county. The part in cultivation bears even flowa. Will sell all, or in parts as suit the buyer. \$25 and \$40 per acre. soon. Terms reasonable. J. H. Brown.